

# VERMONT AGENCY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD & MARKETS

# PRODUCE SAFETY IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

## REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS – FISCAL YEAR 2023

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets is pleased to announce this grant opportunity to help Vermont produce growers implement on-farm food safety practices, transition to compliance with the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule, and meet market demands for on-farm food safety.

Applicants must grow, harvest, pack, or hold “covered produce” as defined by the U.S. Food & Drug Administration’s (FDA) Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule and have average annual produce sales of greater than \$29,245 over the past three years.

## KEY DATES

**PUBLICATION DATE:** February 27, 2023

**APPLICATION OPENS:** March 13, 2023

**APPLICATION DEADLINE:** April 9, 2023

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AGENCY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD & MARKETS

## CONTACT INFORMATION

### PROGRAM QUESTIONS

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### WEBGRANTS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Melissa Moon  
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802-828-3828

Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets staff are available to assist applications during State of Vermont business hours, Monday–Friday, 7:45 AM to 4:30 PM. Please note that immediate assistance may not be available shortly before deadlines.

## WEBGRANTS

Applications for this program are accepted through the [WebGrants](#) grants management system.

### REGISTRATION

New users must complete the [WebGrants Registration Form](#). Registrations are typically processed within two business days. Please register for an account well in advance of the application deadline.

### SUBMISSION POLICY

It is the applicant's responsibility to follow all application instructions including the submission dates and times included in this request for applications (RFA). The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAFAM) will accept the last validated submission through the grants management system, WebGrants, prior to the posted deadline as the final and sole acceptable submission of an application.

We cannot accept submission or re-submission of incomplete or delayed applications after the posted deadline, barring exceptional circumstances. WebGrants will prevent applications from being submitted after the posted deadline.

### SUBMISSION CONFIRMATION

When you have successfully submitted your application, you will be redirected to an **Application Submitted Confirmation** page with an Application ID number. You will also receive a confirmation email.

## SECTION 1: OVERVIEW & ELIGIBILITY

# SECTION 1: OVERVIEW & ELIGIBILITY

## QUICK FACTS

### PROGRAM PURPOSE

The purpose of this grant is to help produce growers implement on-farm food safety practices, transition to compliance with the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule, address compliance with new Produce Safety Rule harvest and post-harvest water requirements, and meet market demands for on-farm food safety.

### ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for funding, applications must be for Vermont farms engaged in production agriculture for commercial purposes that—

1. Grow, harvest, pack or hold “covered produce” as defined by the FSMA Produce Safety Rule;
2. Have annual produce sales, averaged over the past three years, of greater than \$29,245;
3. Have enrolled their farm information in the [Vermont Produce Portal](https://cloud.agriculture.vermont.gov/FSMA/Pages/Login.aspx) at [cloud.agriculture.vermont.gov/FSMA/Pages/Login.aspx](https://cloud.agriculture.vermont.gov/FSMA/Pages/Login.aspx).

### AVAILABLE FUNDS

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets will award up to \$100,000 in this grant round, Round 5.

### MINIMUM & MAXIMUM AWARD

Farms may apply for a minimum of \$5,000 and a maximum of \$20,000 in grant funds.

### PROJECT LENGTH

Grant will be awarded for up to 12 months.

### FUNDING SOURCE

Round 5 of the PSIG program is funded by the State of Vermont through [Act 185 of 2022](#).

## SECTION 1: OVERVIEW & ELIGIBILITY

### FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

#### PROGRAM PURPOSE

The purpose of this grant is to help produce growers implement on-farm food safety practices, transition to compliance with the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule, address compliance with new FSMA harvest and post-harvest water requirements, and meet market demands for on-farm food safety.

#### FUTURE GRANT ROUNDS

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture is currently seeking funding for future grant rounds. Beyond Round 5, the future funding of this grant program is uncertain.

#### HOW TO APPLY

All applications must be submitted via the [WebGrants](https://webgrants.vermont.gov) system at [agriculturegrants.vermont.gov](https://agriculturegrants.vermont.gov). Applications will be accepted from **March 13, 2023 – April 9, 2023** at 11:59 PM.

Be advised that technical assistance with WebGrants may not be available shortly before deadlines; please plan accordingly.

#### TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

We encourage applicants to contact the University of Vermont Extension Produce Safety Team for technical assistance while developing applications and during implementation of projects:

**Hans Estrin** (Brattleboro)  
802-257-7967 ext. 312  
[producesafety@uvm.edu](mailto:producesafety@uvm.edu)

**Chris Callahan** (Bennington)  
802-447-7582 ext. 256  
[producesafety@uvm.edu](mailto:producesafety@uvm.edu)

**Andy Chamberlin** (South Burlington)  
802-651-8343 ext. 512  
[producesafety@uvm.edu](mailto:producesafety@uvm.edu)

Covered farms wishing to apply for a project related to compliance under the FDA Produce Safety Rule may also contact VAAFM's Agriculture Products Manager:

**Tucker Diego**  
802-622-4412  
[Tucker.Diego@vermont.gov](mailto:Tucker.Diego@vermont.gov)

For additional produce safety resources, visit the Vermont Agency of Agriculture's Produce Program webpage at [agriculture.vermont.gov/produceprogram](https://agriculture.vermont.gov/produceprogram).

## SECTION 1: OVERVIEW & ELIGIBILITY

### ELIGIBILITY

#### ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

To be eligible for funding, applications must be for Vermont farms engaged in production agriculture for commercial purposes that—

1. Grow, harvest, pack or hold “covered produce” as defined by the FSMA Produce Safety Rule (PSR);<sup>1</sup>
2. Have annual produce sales, averaged over the past three years, of greater than \$29,245;<sup>2</sup> and
3. Have enrolled their farm information in the **Vermont Produce Portal** at [cloud.agriculture.vermont.gov/FSMA/Pages/Login.aspx](https://cloud.agriculture.vermont.gov/FSMA/Pages/Login.aspx)<sup>3</sup>

Farms that were previously awarded a Produce Safety Improvement Grant **are eligible** to apply for a grant in this round. Applicants should describe how their project differs from and does not duplicate the previously funded project OR how their project builds upon the previously-funded project

#### ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

This grant can partially defray the costs of implementing on-farm food safety practices in order to help growers transition to compliance with the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule and/or meet market demands for on-farm food safety.

Applicants should be prepared to explain how their project will reduce or prevent on-farm food safety risks and—

1. Help their farm transition to compliance with the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule and/or meet market demands for on-farm food safety; or
2. Address compliance with new Produce Safety Rule harvest and post-harvest water requirements; or
3. Meet market demands for on-farm food safety.

See **Section II: Application** for details.

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<sup>1</sup> To determine whether your farm grows “covered produce,” refer to **Appendix: Definitions**.

<sup>2</sup> For details on how to calculate your average annual produce sales, refer to **Appendix: Definitions**.

<sup>3</sup> For instructions on how to enroll in the Vermont Produce Portal, see **Section II: Application**.

## SECTION 1: OVERVIEW & ELIGIBILITY

### INELIGIBLE PROJECTS

- Applications that fail to demonstrate how produce safety risks will be prevented or reduced
- Applications for completed projects for which the applicant seeks reimbursement
- Applicants out of compliance with any federal, state, or local laws or regulations
- Applicants not engaged in commercial agriculture
- Applicants who failed to meet requirements for previous Agency grants and/or assistance programs, or from individuals or groups unable to perform or currently experiencing performance issues with previous Agency grant obligations

### RELATIONSHIP TO PSR, GAP & CAPS

#### How does this grant relate to the FSMA Produce Safety Rule (PSR) or produce safety accreditations/certifications such as Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)?

This grant is intended to assist Vermont growers with produce safety risk prevention and reduction. It may be a useful resource to help meet certain requirements under the PSR, or for produce safety certification or accreditation programs such as USDA's Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), the Vermont Vegetable and Berry Growers Association's (VVBGA) Community Accreditation for Produce Safety (CAPS), or other programs. However, grant approval in no way guarantees compliance under the PSR or certification/accreditation under GAP, CAPS, or other produce safety programs.

- For assistance in determining whether your farm is covered by the FSMA Produce Safety Rule, contact the Vermont Produce Program at [AGR.Produce@vermont.gov](mailto:AGR.Produce@vermont.gov) or (802) 585-6225.
- To learn more about the PSR, visit [www.fda.gov/fsma](http://www.fda.gov/fsma).
- Learn more about USDA GAP at [www.ams.usda.gov/services/auditing/gap-ghp](http://www.ams.usda.gov/services/auditing/gap-ghp).
- Learn more about the VVBGA CAPS program at [practicalproducesafetyvt.wordpress.com](http://practicalproducesafetyvt.wordpress.com).

### MATCHING FUNDS

Matching funds are not required for this grant program.

### APPLICATION REVIEW

Grants will be awarded through a competitive review process. Applying earlier during the open application period will not provide any advantage in this process. See **Section III: Evaluation Criteria** for more information.

### DEADLINES

All applications must be submitted through WebGrants by **April 9, 2023 at 11:59 PM**. The WebGrants system will not accept applications submitted after this time.

## SECTION 1: OVERVIEW & ELIGIBILITY

Applicants can expect to hear back regarding award decisions in early May 2023.

### KEY DATES

#### DATES MAY BE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

<b>FEBRUARY 27, 2023</b>	Request for Applications (RFA) released
<b>MARCH 13, 2023</b>	Application opens in WebGrants
<b>APRIL 9, 2023 at 11:59 PM</b>	Application Deadline
<b>MAY 2023</b>	Award Decisions Announced
<b>JUNE 2023</b>	Grant Agreement Execution
<b>MAY 31, 2024</b>	Grant End Date
<b>JUNE 30, 2024</b>	Final Report Due

### RELATED FUNDED OPPORTUNITIES

#### FARM SERVICE AGENCY FOOD STORAGE FACILITY LOAN PROGRAM

The Farm Service Agency Food Storage Facility Loan Program provides low-interest financing, so producers can build or upgrade facilities to store eligible commodities, including fruits and vegetables. Eligible facility types include facilities for cold storage. Drying and handling and storage equipment is also eligible, including storage and handling trucks.

[www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/price-support/facility-loans/farm-storage](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/price-support/facility-loans/farm-storage)

#### VERMONT FARM FUND

The Vermont Farm Fund offers no-hassle, low-interest loans to Vermont farmers and value-added food producers to invest and innovate for growth. [vermontfarmfund.org](http://vermontfarmfund.org)

#### WORKING LANDS ENTERPRISE INITIATIVE

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture's Working Lands program offers grants and loans to fund agriculture and forestry projects that enhance Vermont's communities, economy, and culture. [workinglands.vermont.gov](http://workinglands.vermont.gov)

#### WATER QUALITY FARMER ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture's Water Quality division offers assistance and resources to farmers to improve agricultural practices that increase farm viability and protect water quality.

[agriculture.vermont.gov/water-quality/assistance-programs](http://agriculture.vermont.gov/water-quality/assistance-programs)<https://agriculture.vermont.gov/water-quality/farmer-assistance>

## **SECTION 1: OVERVIEW & ELIGIBILITY**

### **NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE**

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) financial assistance programs (EQIP, CSP, and AMA) offer financial and technical assistance to help agricultural producers make and maintain conservation improvements on their land.

[www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/vt/programs/financial](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/vt/programs/financial)

### **RMA-AMS HARMONIZED GAP ASSISTANCE**

RMA-AMS Harmonized GAP Assistance is a joint effort by USDA Risk Management Agency (RMA) and USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) to increase market access for fruit and vegetable producers by helping them pay for buyer-required food safety certifications. Under the program, USDA will cover the costs of voluntary USDA Harmonized GAP and Harmonized GAP Plus+ audits.

[www.ams.usda.gov/publications/content/rma-ams-harmonized-gap-assistance-qa](http://www.ams.usda.gov/publications/content/rma-ams-harmonized-gap-assistance-qa)

### **ADDITIONAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES & RESOURCES FOR BUSINESSES**

VAAFM offers a menu of [funding opportunities](#) as well as [business planning and assistance](#) resources available to the Vermont agricultural community:

- Funding Opportunities: [agriculture.vermont.gov/grants](http://agriculture.vermont.gov/grants)
- Business Planning & Assistance: [agriculture.vermont.gov/businessdevelopment/planning](http://agriculture.vermont.gov/businessdevelopment/planning)

## SECTION 2: APPLICATION

# SECTION 2: APPLICATION

Applications must be submitted through the Agency's grant management system, WebGrants, at [agriculturegrants.vermont.gov](http://agriculturegrants.vermont.gov). Below is a guide to the information requested in the online application. You may find it helpful to draft your answers in a Word document first, and then copy and paste into the WebGrants forms.

We encourage you to register as a new user in WebGrants in advance of applying to gain familiarity with the system. After registering, add [agriculturegrants.vermont@webgrantsmail.com](mailto:agriculturegrants.vermont@webgrantsmail.com) to your email contacts or "safe senders" list to ensure you receive messages and alerts from the system.

## APPLICANT INFORMATION

The application will require the following information about the applicant and farm.

- First Name
- Last Name
- Title
- Email
- Physical Address
- Mailing Address
- Phone Number
- Farm Name
- Is the farm registered as a business with the State of Vermont?
- Farm Physical Address

You will be asked to self-certify that you are in compliance with State regulations and in good standing in accordance with the State of Vermont Act 154. "Good standing" means that the applicant:

- Is not a named party in any administrative order, consent decree, or judicial order relating to Vermont water quality standards issued by the State or any of its agencies or departments; and
- Is in compliance with all federal and State water quality laws and regulations.

A full copy of the Certification of Good Standing with Act 143 can be found at [finance.vermont.gov/sites/finance/files/documents/Forms/Grant\\_Recipients/FIN-Act154\\_Cert.pdf](http://finance.vermont.gov/sites/finance/files/documents/Forms/Grant_Recipients/FIN-Act154_Cert.pdf)

## FARM DESCRIPTION

To begin your application, click the Farm Description form and answer the following questions.

- Does your farm grow, harvest, pack, or hold "covered produce" as defined by FDA's Produce Safety Rule?

## SECTION 2: APPLICATION

- Does your farm have average annual produce sales of greater than \$29,245 over the past three years (2019 – 2021)?
- Total acres in produce production
- Total number of full-time employees in 2022 season
- Total number of part-time/seasonal employees in 2022 season
- Total number of employees in 2022 season
- How many years has your farm been in business?
- Has someone from your farm completed the [Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training](#) Course?

If yes, enter name, role, and month/year training completed.

- Has your farm participated in the VVBGA [Community Accreditation for Produce Safety](#) (CAPS) program or completed a [USDA GAP](#) audit?

If yes, enter the name of the program and the last year of participation.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Answer the following questions about your project and the on-farm produce safety improvements you will complete.

1. Briefly describe your improvement project.
2. List all fruit or vegetable crops that this project will impact.
3. Identify the produce safety risks your project will prevent or reduce.
4. Explain how the risks you have identified will be prevented or reduced through the on-farm produce safety improvements proposed.

We encourage you to explain why the risk(s) are significant, for example due to severity or likelihood of occurrence, and how your project will prevent or reduce the risk(s) using a realistic or proven technique, equipment, or method.

5. Describe how this project will help your farm achieve compliance with the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule (PSR), address compliance with new Produce Safety Rule harvest and post-harvest water requirements; or meet market demands for on-farm food safety.
6. Describe any steps you have already taken to move toward compliance with the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule (PSR) and/or meet market demands for on-farm food safety.
7. Provide a realistic timeline for completing your project from June 1, 2023 – May 31, 2024.
8. Are there any required permits, or contingencies that must be fulfilled in order for this improvement to be successfully completed?

If yes, list all permits and/or contingencies and the anticipated dates they will be obtained.

9. Once the project is complete, how will you maintain the improvement over time?

## SECTION 2: APPLICATION

### BUDGET

#### BUDGET DETAILS

**MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES:** List the names, quantities, and estimated cost of any materials, supplies, and fabricated parts required for this project. *Examples: bins, harvest totes, construction materials.*

**EQUIPMENT:** List the names, quantities, and estimated cost of each piece of equipment to be purchased. *Examples: handwashing stations, rinse conveyor, etc.*

**SALARY/WAGES/CONTRACTUAL:** Estimate the labor costs associated with construction or equipment installation, including an estimated hourly wage and hours worked. This category includes any costs to be paid to a contractor or consultant to procure specialized services. *Examples: Bill for Service from construction company or a well-drilling company.*

**OTHER:** Include any expenses not covered in any of the previous budget categories. Be sure to break down costs into cost/unit. Describe the purpose of each item listed and how it is necessary for completion of your project.

#### MATCHING FUNDS

Matching funds are not required. However, if your project will cost more to complete than the amount requested, you must show that you have sufficient match (cash and/or in-kind) to complete the project.

1. Enter the total estimated costs of your project.
2. Enter the grant funds requested for your project.
3. If the total costs are greater than the funds requested, describe other funding sources that will be used to cover the remaining costs (e.g., bank funds, cash flow, another grant or loan, etc.).

#### BUDGET SUMMARY

Budget Summary				
Expense Category	Funds Requested	Match – If Applicable	Match Source	Total Project Cost
Materials and Supplies	\$	\$		\$
Equipment	\$	\$		\$
Salary/Wages/Contractual	\$	\$		\$
Other	\$	\$		\$
Subtotal	\$	\$		\$

<b>Total Request</b>	\$
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*Total request cannot exceed \$20,000.*

## SECTION 2: APPLICATION

### FINAL APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- Have you enrolled your farm information on the [Vermont Produce Portal](https://cloud.agriculture.vermont.gov/FSMA/Pages/Login.aspx) website at [cloud.agriculture.vermont.gov/FSMA/Pages/Login.aspx](https://cloud.agriculture.vermont.gov/FSMA/Pages/Login.aspx)?
- Indicate whether you have discussed your project and planned improvements with the University of Vermont Extension Produce Safety Team. (Strongly encouraged but not required.) If yes, whom did you speak with?
- Have you checked whether your project requires any permits or has any contingencies that may affect your ability to complete it?
- How did you learn about this grant opportunity?

### HOW TO ENROLL IN THE VERMONT PRODUCE PORTAL

Farms must complete the following steps in order to enroll their farm in the [Vermont Produce Portal](https://cloud.agriculture.vermont.gov/FSMA/Pages/Login.aspx):

1. Visit [cloud.agriculture.vermont.gov/FSMA/Pages/Login.aspx](https://cloud.agriculture.vermont.gov/FSMA/Pages/Login.aspx) to access the Vermont Produce Portal login page.
2. Click Register and set a username and password.
3. Verify your email to create an account.
4. After logging in for the first time, select the Manage Farms link.
5. At the top of the page, click New Farm and enter the required information about your farm (location, sales, produce varieties cultivated, contact information, etc.)
6. When you are finished, click Submit.

### WEBGRANTS APPLICATION GUIDE

Visit the Agency of Agriculture website through the URL below to see a step-by-step guide to submitting a grant application.

[agriculture.vermont.gov/grants/howtoapply](https://agriculture.vermont.gov/grants/howtoapply)

## **SECTION 3: APPLICATION EVALUATION CRITERIA**

# **SECTION 3: APPLICATION EVALUATION CRITERIA**

Grants will be awarded through an internal review process with Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets and University of Vermont Extension staff.

## **SCREENING CRITERIA**

Applications will be screened based upon the following criteria:

- The application meets all eligibility and submission requirements.
- The application adequately identifies all contingencies or permits that may be required.
- The applicant's farm information is enrolled on the Vermont Produce Portal website at [cloud.agriculture.vermont.gov/FSMA/Pages/Login.aspx](https://cloud.agriculture.vermont.gov/FSMA/Pages/Login.aspx)

## **EVALUATION CRITERIA**

Eligible applications will be scored according to the following criteria:

### **PRODUCE SAFETY RISKS**

Proposal identifies a significant produce safety risk that the improvement project will address and explains how the improvement will help prevent or reduce that risk.

Proposals that explain why a risk is significant, for example due to severity or likelihood of occurrence, and identify how the produce safety improvement project will prevent or reduce that risk using a realistic or proven technique, equipment, or method will receive the highest scores.

*Up to 30 points*

### **PROJECT NEED & PRODUCE SAFETY IMPACT**

Applicant effectively describes the farm's need for these funds to help achieve compliance with the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule (PSR) and/or meet market demands for on-farm food safety. Project will have an impact beyond farm efficiency.

*Up to 25 points*

### **EXPERTISE & MAINTENANCE**

Applicant demonstrates that they have access to necessary expertise to successfully complete the project and maintain the produce safety improvement over time. This may include the farmer, staff, contractors, or technical assistance providers.

*Up to 15 points.*

### **TIMELINE**

Project timeline is reasonable for the term of the grant period.

*Up to 10 points*

### **SECTION 3: APPLICATION EVALUATION CRITERIA**

#### **BUDGET**

Budget summary is realistic and sufficient to accomplish the work proposed. If the total costs are greater than the funds requested, the applicant provides a clear and sound explanation of other funding sources that will be used to cover the remaining costs.

*Up to 10 points*

#### **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

Applicant has consulted with University of Vermont (UVM) Extension or other qualified technical assistance provider to discuss their grant-funded project. We strongly encourage applicants to consult with the UVM Extension Produce Safety Team to aid in project design and implementation.

*Up to 10 points*

## SECTION 4: GRANT MANAGEMENT & REPORTING

# SECTION 4: GRANT MANAGEMENT & REPORTING

## GRANT AGREEMENT & PAYMENT

Prior to receiving funding, successful applicants must sign a grant agreement with the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAFAM) indicating their intent to complete the proposed project and authorizing VAAFAM to monitor the project's progress. The grant agreement will include provisions (terms and conditions) set by the State of Vermont as well as any program-specific requirements. Review [Attachment C - Standard State Provisions and Contracts and Grants](#) (12/15/2017 Revised) at [bgs.vermont.gov/purchasing-contracting/forms](https://bgs.vermont.gov/purchasing-contracting/forms) for the most recent State of Vermont provisions.

Prior to commencement of work and release of any payments, grantee must submit:

- A. A certificate of insurance consistent with the requirements set forth in Attachment C of the grant agreement *[Not required if grantee has a current certificate of insurance on file with the Agency of Agriculture.]*
- B. A current [IRS Form W-9](#) (Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification), signed within the past six months *[Not required if grantee is already a state vendor.]*
- C. Complete [Act 154 Good Standing Certification](#). Find this form at [finance.vermont.gov/vendors-and-grantees](https://finance.vermont.gov/vendors-and-grantees).
- D. Documentation verifying pledged matching funds, as applicable.

## GRANTEE PAYMENT SCHEDULE

The Agency will provide 50% of funds upon the receipt of 1) a signed grant agreement and related documents; 2) the submission and approval of a claim with associated invoice in the WebGrants system; and 3) proof that the applicant has obtained any permits that may be required for their project, if applicable. The final 50% of funds will be provided after completion of the project, and when a final report, claim, and invoice have been submitted and approved in the WebGrants system.

Permits that are necessary for the successful completion of your project, such as a building permit, wastewater permit, etc. must be obtained prior to the disbursement of grant funds. The Agency reserves the right to deny your application if you fail to obtain the necessary permits within 90 days.

Only expenses incurred during the grant period are eligible for reimbursement. Project costs occurring prior to or after the end date of an executed grant are not eligible for reimbursement.

## SECTION 4: GRANT MANAGEMENT & REPORTING

### CERTIFICATE OF INSURANCE

A certificate of insurance (COI) is a common requirement for businesses and organizations; most agents are familiar with it. The State of Vermont must be listed as an additional insured on the grantee's policy. We recommend forwarding the insurance requirements below to prospective insurers for accuracy:

*Insurance: Before commencing work on this Agreement the Party must provide certificates of insurance to show that the following minimum coverages are in effect. It is the responsibility of the Party to maintain current certificates of insurance on file with the State through the term of this Agreement. No warranty is made that the coverages and limits listed herein are adequate to cover and protect the interests of the Party for the Party's operations. These are solely minimums that have been established to protect the interests of the State.*

*Workers Compensation: With respect to all operations performed, the Party shall carry workers' compensation insurance in accordance with the laws of the State of Vermont. Vermont will accept an out-of-state employer's workers' compensation coverage while operating in Vermont provided that the insurance carrier is licensed to write insurance in Vermont and an amendatory endorsement is added to the policy adding Vermont for coverage purposes. Otherwise, the party shall secure a Vermont workers' compensation policy, if necessary, to comply with Vermont law.*

*General Liability and Property Damage: With respect to all operations performed under this Agreement, the Party shall carry general liability insurance having all major divisions of coverage including, but not limited to:*

*Premises - Operations*

*Products and Completed Operations*

*Personal Injury Liability*

*Contractual Liability*

*The policy shall be on an occurrence form and limits shall not be less than:*

*\$1,000,000 Each Occurrence*

*\$2,000,000 General Aggregate*

*\$1,000,000 Products/Completed Operations Aggregate*

*\$1,000,000 Personal & Advertising Injury*

*Automotive Liability: The Party shall carry automotive liability insurance covering all motor vehicles, including hired and non-owned coverage, used in connection with the Agreement. Limits of coverage shall not be less than \$500,000 combined single limit. If performance of this Agreement involves construction, or the transport of persons or hazardous materials, limits of coverage shall not be less than \$1,000,000 combined single limit.*

*Additional Insured. The General Liability and Property Damage coverages required for performance of this Agreement shall include the State of Vermont and its agencies, departments, officers and employees as Additional Insureds. If performance of this Agreement involves construction, or the transport of persons or hazardous materials, then the required Automotive Liability coverage shall include the State of Vermont and its agencies, departments, officers and employees as Additional Insureds. Coverage shall be primary and non-contributory with any other insurance and self-insurance.*

*Notice of Cancellation or Change. There shall be no cancellation, change, potential exhaustion of aggregate limits or non-renewal of insurance coverage(s) without thirty (30) days written prior written notice to the State.*

## SECTION 4: GRANT MANAGEMENT & REPORTING

### PERMITS

Applicants who are awarded a grant must apply for and receive all required permits, licenses, and any other federal, state, or local approvals necessary for the project prior to any reimbursement from the Agency.

### SITE VISITS

VAAF staff and/or UVM Extension partners may contact successful applicants to arrange a site visit for their project during or proceeding the grant agreement period.

### PUBLIC INFORMATION

Except for grantee proprietary and personal identifying data, as provided under 1 V.S.A. § 317(c), grantee names, projects, the amount of grant awards, and all other information regarding Produce Safety Improvement Grant projects are considered public information and may be subject to disclosure.

### DURATION

All projects funded in this round must be completed no later than **May 31, 2024**. Final reports must be submitted no later than **June 30, 2024**.

### REPORTING

Grantees should submit a final report as soon as their project is complete but no later than June 30, 2024. Final reports should be submitted online in the WebGrants system and must include verification that the project has been completed, photo and/or video documentation of the completed project, and a description of how the grant has improved produce safety on the farm. The Agency of Agriculture may request receipts, proof of purchases, or other documents showing that grant funds have been used to complete the project.

Information submitted in any report to the Agency will be a public record.

## **APPENDIX: DEFINITIONS**

### **AVERAGE ANNUAL PRODUCE SALES**

To be eligible for this funding opportunity, applicants must have an average annual monetary value of produce sold during the previous 3-year period of greater than \$25,000 (on a rolling basis), adjusted for inflation using 2011 as the baseline year for calculating the adjustment (21 C.F.R. § 112.4). The 3-year value for 2019–2021 is \$29,245. For more FSMA Inflation Adjusted Cut Offs, visit [www.fda.gov/food/guidanceregulation/fsma/ucm554484.htm](http://www.fda.gov/food/guidanceregulation/fsma/ucm554484.htm). If the applicant has less than three years of sales, take the average of annual produce sales, adjusted for inflation as stated above, for the years that the farm has been in operation.

### **PRODUCE**

Produce means any fruit or vegetable (including mixes of intact fruits and vegetables) and includes mushrooms, sprouts (irrespective of seed source), peanuts, tree nuts, and herbs.

Produce does not include food grains—meaning the small, hard fruits or seeds of arable crops, or the crops bearing these fruits or seeds, that are primarily grown and processed for use as meal, flour, baked goods, cereals and oils rather than for direct consumption as small, hard fruits or seeds (including cereal grains, pseudo cereals, oilseeds and other plants used in the same fashion). Examples of food grains include barley, dent- or flint-corn, sorghum, oats, rice, rye, wheat, amaranth, quinoa, buckwheat, and oilseeds (e.g., cotton seed, flax seed, rapeseed, soybean, and sunflower seed) (21 C.F.R. § 112.3).

### **COVERED PRODUCE**

Covered produce includes any raw fruit or vegetable commonly consumed raw, including, but not limited to, the following: fruits and vegetables such as almonds, apples, apricots, apriums, Artichokes-globetype, Asian pears, avocados, babacos, bananas, Belgian endive, blackberries, blueberries, boysenberries, brazil nuts, broad beans, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, burdock, cabbages, Chinese cabbages (Bok Choy, mustard, and Napa), cantaloupes, carambolas, carrots, cauliflower, celeriac, celery, chayote fruit, cherries (sweet), chestnuts, chicory (roots and tops), citrus (such as clementine, grapefruit, lemons, limes, mandarin, oranges, tangerines, tangors, and uniuq fruit), cowpea beans, cress-garden, cucumbers, curly endive, currants, dandelion leaves, fennel-Florence, garlic, genip, gooseberries, grapes, green beans, guavas, herbs (such as basil, chives, cilantro, oregano, and parsley), honeydew, huckleberries, Jerusalem artichokes, kale, kiwifruit, kohlrabi, kumquats, leek, lettuce, lychees, macadamia nuts, mangos, other melons (such as Canary, Crenshaw and Persian), mulberries, mushrooms, mustard greens, nectarines, onions, papayas, parsnips, passion fruit, peaches, pears, peas, peas-pigeon, peppers (such as bell and hot), pine

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nuts, pineapples, plantains, plums, plumcots, quince, radishes, raspberries, rhubarb, rutabagas, scallions, shallots, snow peas, soursop, spinach, sprouts (such as alfalfa and mung bean), strawberries, summer squash (such as patty pan, yellow and zucchini), sweetsop, Swiss chard, taro, tomatoes, turmeric, turnips (roots and tops), walnuts, watercress, watermelons, and yams (21 C.F.R. § 112.1(b)(1)).

### **RARELY CONSUMED RAW**

The following produce is considered “rarely consumed raw” and is not covered by the Produce Safety Rule: asparagus; beans, black; beans, great Northern; beans, kidney; beans, lima; beans, navy; beans, pinto; beets, garden (roots and tops); beets, sugar; cashews; cherries, sour; chickpeas; cocoa beans; coffee beans; collards; corn, sweet; cranberries; dates; dill (seeds and weed); eggplants; figs; ginger; hazelnuts; horseradish; lentils; okra; peanuts; pecans; peppermint; potatoes; pumpkins; squash, winter; sweet potatoes; and water chestnuts (21 C.F.R. §112.2(a)(1))